LIFT & HANDLE PATIENTS SAFELY

Especially in nursing facilities and home health services, lifting and handling patients often places significant strain on healthcare professionals. Use the following steps as a guide to prepare your employees to manage these tasks safely.

In your training session:

1. Ask your employees to describe common tasks that put the most strain on their bodies.
   Examples may include:
   - Manually lifting patients
   - Transferring patients to their sides and to other beds
   - Catching falling patients
   - Restraining resistant patients
   - Working in awkward positions

2. Discuss engineering controls that your company implements to reduce strain on the body.
   See examples in the yellow panel. Make sure that your employees are trained to use equipment correctly, including under what circumstances each piece of equipment should be used.

3. Review administrative controls that your company implements to reduce strain on the body.
   See examples in the yellow panel. Enforce these controls strictly by constantly training employees and having them sign a formal written policy in which they agree to follow company procedures.

4. Read the following scenarios, having employees describe how they would respond. Consider substituting these situations with other examples that are specific to your workplace.
   - A nurse is escorting an elderly, bariatric patient to the bathroom when the patient falls to the floor. The patient seems to be okay, but she cannot stand up by herself.
   - A nursing assistant needs to transfer a patient from the bed to a wheelchair.
   - A patient begins to resist the medical worker’s help in the bathroom during a transfer from a wheelchair.

5. Explain the process for reporting injuries or near-miss incidents.

Consider the following examples of ways to control hazards in your workplace:

ENGINEERING CONTROLS
- Mechanical lifting equipment
- Lateral transfer equipment
- Walking belts
- Sliding boards
- Slip sheets
- Height-adjustable electric beds
- Wheelchairs with removable arms
- Shower chairs that can be used for bathing and toileting
- Shower stalls on even flooring to allow lateral patient transfers

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS
- Training employees to use equipment correctly
- Enforcing strict guidelines for manual lifting, such as weight limits, when to lift in pairs and daily lift limits
- Providing enough staff

For more patient handling best practices, see OSHA’s Hospital eTool.

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(Name of Company) views keeping its employees safe as a first priority. We aim to ensure that all of our employees recognize workplace hazards in the healthcare field. Upon completion of a safe patient handling training, we require all of our employees to agree to follow certain safety rules to protect themselves from unnecessary risks.

Please read and initial the following statements to indicate that you understand and agree.

• I will minimize strain on my body where possible by:
  – using appropriate patient handling assistive devices. My initials below signify my training and clearance to use the following assistive devices, filled in by my employer: __________

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  – using two-person lifts in situations where I have been trained to do so.
  – seeking help when I am uncertain or need assistance in handling a patient. __________

• I will report all patient-handling injuries and incidents to my supervisor immediately, even if I may not require medical attention. __________

I, ________________________________(Employee Name), understand and agree to follow the aforementioned safety policies. I understand that violating any of these rules may affect my position here at the company, up to and including termination of employment.

Name: ___________________________________________ Date: __________________________

Signature: ___________________________________________